

Message Text

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 172867

EXDIS//FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, LE, SY, US, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ACTIONS IN LEBANON

REF: PARKER-DRAPER AND VIETS-DRAPER TELECONS

1. SATURDAY, JULY 8, ISRAELI EMBASSY CONTACTED DEPARTMENT
SEVERAL TIMES TO EXPRESS GREAT CONCERN OVER FOLLOWING QUOTE
IN JULY 8 WASHINGTON POST STORY BY WILLIAM BRANIGIN DATE-
LINED BEIRUT AND SOURCED TO "VETERAN DIPLOMAT": QTE A
WESTERN DIPLOMAT CALLED THE UNCOMPROMISING RIGHTIST STAND
"VERY UNFORTUNATE" AND WARNED THAT IT COULD BE PART OF A
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CHAIN OF EVENTS CULMINATING IN A NEW MIDDLE EAST CONFRONTA-
TION.

A VETERAN DIPLOMAT SAID CHRISTIAN RELIANCE ON THE ISRAELI
WARNING TO SYRIA "ONLY MAKES A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION MORE
DIFFICULT." HE SAID SUCH A SITUATION MIGHT COMPEL SYRIA
TO ALSO ADOPT AN UNCOMPROMISING STANCE.

"IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT THIS IS JUST WHAT ISRAEL WANTS," THE DIPLOMAT SAID. "THE ISRAELI SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE TO CREATE ANOTHER PROBLEM. AND RIGHT NOW THEIR MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION IS TURNING AGAINST THEM. A BEAUTIFUL WAY TO GET OUT OF THIS IS TO

HAVE ANOTHER MIDDLE EAST WAR."

HE SAID ISRAELI THREATS TO INTERVENE AGAINST SYRIA IN THE BEIRUT FIGHTING AMOUNTED TO "A DELIBERATE MEANS OF PREVENTING A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION HERE." END QTE.

2. ON SATURDAY NIGHT ISRAELI MINISTER BAR-ON TELEPHONED VELIOTES TO EXPRESS AGAIN DEEP ISRAELI CONCERN ABOUT THIS QUOTE AND TO SUGGEST THAT THE SOURCE MIGHT WELL BE AMBASSADOR PARKER OR OTHER AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCE IN BEIRUT. BAR-ON MADE POINT THAT IF AMERICAN DIPLOMATS INDEED WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS TYPE OF STORY IT WOULD CAUSE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN JERUSALEM. VELIOTES MADE FOLLOWING POINTS IN REPLY:

-- ALL RESPONSIBLE U.S. OFFICIALS DEALING WITH LEBANESE CRISIS RECOGNIZE THAT U.S. AND ISRAEL SHARE COMMON GOAL IN MAINTAINING CEASEFIRE, STOPPING THE KILLING, AND AVOIDING POSSIBILITY OF ESCALATION OF HOSTILITIES IN CONFIDENTIAL

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LEBANON.

-- OUR RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN OFFICIALS DEALING WITH THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS RECOGNIZE THAT ISRAEL AND THE U.S. SHARE THE COMMON GOAL OF MOVING THE AREA TOWARDS PEACE WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS AT PRESENT ON THE FORTHCOMING LONDON TALKS.

-- IN REPORTING ON SUBJECT OF ARTICLE TO JERUSALEM, BAR-ON SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE FOREGOING.

-- AS CONCERNS THE QUOTE IN THE BRANIGIN STORY, THE SOURCE, IF THERE WAS ONE, COULD BE ANY DIPLOMAT AT ANY LEVEL FROM ANY WESTERN MISSION. IT WOULD BE WRONG AND GROSSLY UNFAIR TO PERSIST IN SUGGESTING THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER OR HIS STAFF MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE.

3. SUBSEQUENT TO ABOVE, DRAPER LEARNED FROM PARKER THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN OR TALKED TO BRANIGIN. DRAPER PASSED THIS TO VIETS, AND ALSO INFORMED BAR-ON, WHO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION.

4. COMMENT: TO JUDGE FROM THE FLURRY OF AGITATED ACTIVITY HERE, THIS SUBJECT WILL PROBABLY BE RAISED WITH YOU IN ISRAEL. IF SO, YOU MAY DRAW ON THE ABOVE IN REPLY. WE LEAVE IT TO YOUR DISCRETION TO DECIDE IF IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TAKING THE INITIATIVE WITH THE ISRAELIS IN ATTEMPT TO DEFUSE THEIR CONCERN. VANCE

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